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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 000956

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KMPI](#) [PREL](#) [EAI](#) [D](#) [XF](#) [PK](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: GMEI: SUPPORT COMBINED WITH ADVICE FROM DFM NOMAN

REF: A. 4/21 HULL-WAYNE E-MAIL

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 86312

[1](#)C. 4/18 FRANCESKI-HULL E-MAIL (GMEI PAPERS)

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull for reasons 1.5 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (c) Summary: On 4/21, Pol/Econ Chief delivered talking points (ref b) and GMEI paper package (ref c) to DFM Noman. While pledging to support the reforms, Noman's initial reaction included a reminder that the USG's credibility vis a vis reform is being adversely impacted by the Administration's public statements on the Israel-Palestine issue and the recent killing of Hamas leaders. Specifically, he criticized the lack of a strong condemnation of Israel following the Rantisi assassination. Embassy Sana'a will be taking broad soundings -- including the ROYG, civil society, NGOs and businesspeople -- on GMEI to provide further reporting in advance of the June Sea Island meeting. End summary.

GMEI REFORMS IMPORTANT, BUT U.S. HAS "ALIENATED" THE ARAB WORLD BY FAILING TO CONDEMN ISRAELI VIOLENCE

[1](#)2. (c) Before he even reviewed the GMEI papers, the Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe, the Americas and International Organizations Mustapha Noman launched into concerns that the GMEI will get mired down in a debate about the U.S. position on Israel-Palestine. He said the U.S. Administration's statements following the Bush-Sharon meeting, and the Rantisi assassination less than 48-hours later (and only 72-hours after Egyptian President Mubarak left the U.S.) make it difficult for liberals, such as himself, to push forward reforms. Even after Pol/Econ Chief reiterated that reform cannot be held hostage to the Arab-Israeli peace process, he maintained that any reforms labeled U.S. are unlikely to be supported, even if parties agree with the ideas. Without a shift in U.S. public statements, he does not believe the opposition parties in Yemen will support adopting the ideas in the GMEI, even if they support the principles. (Comment: This is in sharp contrast to what Post has heard from the National Democratic Institute (NDI)'s Deputy Country Director, who believes that the majority of moderate Islahis will support the initiative regardless of U.S. statements (4/21 meeting reported septel). End comment.)

[1](#)3. (c) Noman relayed stories of his 6-year old son asking him about Dr. Abdul Aziz (Rantisi)'s death and a 15-year-old student's assertions that U.S. support for Israel is the equivalent to an anti-Arab policy to support his position that the U.S. needs to convince the Arab street that it is credible. Citing the backdrop of the 9/11 hearings and the built-up alienation between the U.S. and the Arab World, he contrasted British PM Blair's "blunt condemnation" of the killing to the U.S. Administration "turning a blind eye." Claiming that he was reluctant to use the term "double standard," he nonetheless suggested that any statement condemning Israel's acts, especially the murders of Shaykh Yassin and Rantisi, would strengthen both our position on reform and our call to Palestine to control the violence.

[1](#)4. (c) Indicating his personal support for the principle and substance of the reforms encompassed by GMEI, Noman promised to circulate the papers broadly. He also recommended that Post approach the major political parties and university figures to get reactions to the proposals. (Comment: Despite his lengthy diatribe on U.S. faults on public handling of the Arab-Israel conflict, Noman is progressive and projected a strong commitment to seizing the opportunity for input to the evolving GMEI. End comment).

[1](#)5. (u) Over the next 6 to 8 weeks, Post has a strategy to take the pulse of government officials, civil society, NGOs and business on GMEI proposals and will provide reporting in septels.

HULL